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ABSTRACT

Male and female students from general psychology classes completed several attitudinal questionnaires, including the Women as Managers Scale and the Attitudes Toward Women Scale. In a later experimental session, subjects viewed a 10-minute video tape that contained either a male or a female directing a mixed sex triad on a dominoes design task. The script for the leaders and the performance of the groups were identical in each instance. Following the viewing of the video tape, subjects were given questionnaires pertaining to the performance of the leader and the group, characteristics of the leader and the group, and attribution for the outcome on the task. Results indicated that males endorse a more conservative role for females, particularly in management roles, than do females. Female subjects generally evaluated female leaders positively, while male subjects evaluated male leaders positively. (Author)

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Attitudinal Measures and Evaluation of Males and Females in Leadership Roles

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Problem

In recent years a number of events have occurred which have brought about changes in women's occupational status. Current projections indicate that more women will be entering the labor market as full-time employees and that women will represent 50 percent of the total work force by the 1980's (U.S. Department of Labor, 1971). Even though a number of economic, legislative and social reforms have been undertaken to encourage women to assume an equal place in the labor force, the assimilation of women into management or leadership roles has met with some problems. In fact, the earnings gap between males and females in comparable positions and educational levels is continuing to widen rather than diminish (Deckard, 1975) suggesting that women are not yet experiencing the upward mobilities in their jobs that men may experience.

Recent studies indicate that current college students still hold fairly rigid, persistent and pervasive stereotypes regarding appropriate sex role behavior (Angrist, 1969; Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel, 1970; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Constantinople, 1973; Jenkin & Vroegh, 1969). Broverman et al. (1972) found that men were described by both male and female students as: more aggressive,

independent, objective, dominant, active, logical, ambitious, adventurous and self-confident. They were also seen as innately more competitive, skilled in business and able to make decisions more easily than women. Women, however, are characterized as more talkative, tactful, gentle, religious, neat, quiet, dependent, illogical, emotional, sensitive and passive than men. Given these stereotypes and the fact that judgement regarding performance is not a totally objective process, an individual's sex role bias may influence job or task performance evaluation.

In an early demonstration of sex-linked biases in evaluation of one's performance, Goldberg (1968) found that subjects rated articles more favorably when presented with a masculine name as author than with a feminine name. This bias occured even in areas which were regarded as "feminine" such as home economics.

Fidell (1970) conducted a study to determine if this bias operates in terms of evaluation of job credentials in terms of psychology. Heads of psychology departments (predominately male) were asked to rate the simulated credentials of prospective faculty members with randomly assigned masculine and feminine names. Results indicated a significantly lower academic rank and salary were offered for credentials supposedly from a female job candidate than with identical credentials supposedly submitted by a male.

Deaux and Emsweller (1974) conducted a study in which subjects listened to the performance of another person by means of a video tape and were then asked to evaluate his/her performance. All of the scores were the same and the subjects were told that

the persons observed had done well on the task. Results indicated that regardless of the sex type of the task, males were rated as more skillful than females and further, that good performance by a female was attributed to chance.

Relatively recently a scale has been developed to measure individuals' beliefs about women's role, particularly in leadership and management roles (Peters, Teborg, & Taynor, 1974). This scale, the Women as Managers Scale or WAMS, consists of 21 items rated on a 7 point scale. Normative data reported in 1974 indicated that females obtained significantly more liberal scores than males. This difference was also found in a study by Welsh & Hawker (1978). Little has been reported, however, to establish that in an evaluation of leaders' performance in a group task situation that males will perceive female leaders more negatively than male leaders.

Method

Fifty six undergraduate subjects (28 males, 28 females) who received extra course credit participated in this study. In one session they were asked to complete several attitudinal questionnaires, including the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS) and the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS). During a second session one week later, subjects were told they would be watching a group of individuals working on a task and they would be required to evaluate how well the group accomplished the task. They were additionally told that leaders had been chosen from an earlier study which had indicated that these individuals had particular skill at communicating information to others. Subjects were ran-

domly assigned to watch one of two tapes that contained either a male or a female directing a mixed sex group of subjects on a dominoes design task. The subjects could see the back of the leader's head, so he/she sat behind a screen giving instructions to the group members. The script for the leader and the performance of the group was identical except for the sex of the leader. Following viewing of a 10 minute videotape, subjects were given questionnaires pertaining to the subject's perception of the success of the group, characteristics of the leader and of the group, and attribution of the outcome of the group in working on the task.

Results

The mean score on the WAMS was significantly higher ($p < .001$) for females ($\bar{x} = 125.03$, s.d. = 13.71) than for males ($\bar{x} = 110.42$, s.d. = 16.44). This would indicate that the male subjects define a more conservative role for women, particularly in a leadership role.

Scores from the questionnaire were analyzed by means of a 2 x 2 analysis of variance format; i.e., sex of subject and sex of leader. On the item, "How successfully do you think this task was performed?" ANOVA indicated a significant sex of leader effect ($p < .01$) such that the group with a male leader was seen as performing more successfully than the group with a female leader.

There were no significant differences indicated for the item "To what extent do you think the outcome was attributable to luck?" (For all cells means were less than three.)

When asked about the leader's effect on the outcome, the groups with a male leader rated the leader as having much more of an effect on the outcome than the groups with a female leader.

A significant interaction ($p < .01$) also was obtained, primarily due to the high rating of the effect of the leader by same sex subjects and the low rating of the female leader by the male subjects.

Conversely, when asked how much of the outcome was due to the followers, female subjects rated the followers' influence much higher. An interaction effect was obtained ($p < .01$), indicating that subjects viewing a group led by an opposite sex leader, attribute more of the outcome to the followers.

Interestingly, the female leader was rated as communicating to the followers much better than the male leader did ($p < .05$). When asked how well the followers responded to the leaders' instructions, however, subjects viewing a group led by an opposite sex leader, rated the followers as responding better ($p < .01$). This coincides with the previous result regarding how much of the outcome was attributable to the followers.

Results from the item, "How well do you think the leader was liked by the group?" indicated that opposite sex subjects percieved the leader as being better liked by the group than did subjects who were of the same sex as the leader ($p < .01$). Overall, the female leader was perceived as liking her followers more than was the male leader ($p < .05$).

When asked, "How successful do you think this group would be on a different task?" female subjects rated the groups as more likely to be successful ($p < .001$) and a significant interaction indicated that subjects percieved a group led by a person of the same sex as themselves would be more successful on a differ-

ent task ($p < .001$).

Discussion

The results of the present study indicate that males' perception of females as leaders is somewhat more traditional or conservative than females' perception of that role. This generally more conservative role definition does apparently influence how males evaluate a woman's performance when she is actually in a leadership role.

Previous studies (Deaux & Emswiller, 1974; Deaux & Taynor, 1973; Goldberg, 1968) had indicated that women, as well as men, rated females as generally less competent than males in performance on achievement tasks. However, the present study found a generally favorable evaluation of a female leader by female subjects and a favorable evaluation of a male leader by male subjects. Perhaps female college students not only are endorsing a more liberal role for women, but are also beginning to perceive women who are in non-traditional roles; i.e., leadership roles, as competent.

Interestingly, even though males evaluated the female leader as less successful in leading the group on the task, the female leader was viewed as communicating better to the group and as liking the group better than her male counter-part. This coincides with previous findings that females are perceived as having better verbal skills and better interpersonal skills than males.

Most current research on perception of leadership roles and perception of appropriate sex roles has focused on college student populations. It may be speculated that in the "real

world" these more conservative evaluations of women's role are even more pronounced than in the college environment, thus women who have the ability to perform as leaders or managers may not be evaluated as positively as males who perform similarly. This may account for the continuing problems women are experiencing in the lack of upward job mobility. More research needs to be conducted on the evaluation of women who are in actual managerial positions.

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